

## **Tuition Assistance Application Information**

Conestoga College encourages the upgrading of its employees through its professional development practices. Conestoga College will consider reimbursement to any permanent full-time employee as follows: \$2,500 for any approved post-secondary credit course for a certificate or diploma, \$4,000 for a bachelor's degree, \$5,000 for a master's degree and \$7,000 for a Ph.D. per fiscal year. The fiscal year runs from April 1 – March 31. Approved applicants will receive up to a maximum of 7 years of funding towards their completion of the program of study.

Support Staff employees receiving Employment Stability Funds (ESF) may also be eligible for Tuition Assistance. If, at the end of the fiscal year (April 1 – March 31), the ESF reimbursement does not exceed the annual Tuition Assistance maximums noted above, the employee may be eligible for further reimbursement of up to 50% of the tuition fee per course. If the employee is eligible for this additional support through Tuition Assistance, the combined total of ESF and Tuition Assistance must not exceed the Tuition Assistance annual maximum. Tuition Assistance for Support Staff also receiving ESF is reimbursed annually in April following the end of the fiscal year.

### **Conditions**

Financial Assistance for Tuition Reimbursement is considered for permanent full-time employees according to the following criteria:

1. The applicant must be a permanent full-time employee of Conestoga both at the time of application and at the time the reimbursement would normally be processed.
  
2. The goals and outcomes of any course or program must specifically align with Conestoga's [strategic plan](#) or with the objectives of the employee's department/school. Courses and programs must be related to the current work of the employee, to the courses, programs or services delivered by the college, or in support of the employee's short term career advancement opportunities in preparation for potential positions or programs outlined in specific college plans.
  
3. Reimbursement may be given for pre-approved courses. In exceptional cases, a course (and only one course) completed prior to receiving initial approval from the Professional Development Department may be considered for reimbursement if:
  - There are sufficient funds
  - The application meets all other tuition assistance approval conditions
  - The course was completed within a maximum of six months prior to submission

4. Reimbursement is for tuition only and not for such fees related to other mandatory and optional fees, travel, conferences, seminars or professional memberships.

5. Funds are granted only for courses that are offered as part of a certificate, diploma, or degree program at an accredited post-secondary institution as recognized by Conestoga.

6. Courses eligible for tuition assistance are those taken at an 'acceptable' institution. For purposes of this program, 'acceptable' is defined as follows:

- Any accredited university or college that is an ordinary member of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
- Any accredited university or college recognized by the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996, Ontario Regulation 176/10

While courses or programs at other institutions may be eligible, international institutions must meet approval of a credential evaluation by World Education Services (WES). Employees pursuing non-Canadian credentials are required to provide evidence of equivalency from the [World Education Services \(WES\)](#) along with the Tuition Assistance Application Form.

7. Course requirements must be completed outside the regular work schedule of the employee.

8. Employees may not access these funds while on a Conestoga supported Professional Development Leave.

9. Funds are normally reserved for those applicants who do not receive financial support from other funds.

10. The yearly maximum reimbursement is based on the fiscal year of the payouts, not on the year that courses were taken. Conestoga College will consider reimbursement to any full-time employee as follows: \$2,500 for any approved post-secondary credit course for a certificate or diploma, \$4,000 for a bachelor's degree, \$5,000 for a master's degree and \$7,000 for a Ph.D. per fiscal year. The fiscal year runs from April 1 – March 31.

Support Staff employees also receiving Employment Stability Funds may also be eligible for reimbursement of up to 50% of the tuition fee per course. The combined total of ESF and Tuition Assistance must not exceed the Tuition Assistance annual maximum.

11. Approved applicants will receive up to a maximum of 7 years of funding towards their completion of the program of study.

12. Reimbursement is given on a per course basis and upon submission of evidence of successful completion of the course (normally a grade report and a tuition receipt).

An exception to course-by-course payments is made for ongoing doctoral programs and those masters' programs which are research based and do not progress according to a course-based schedule. In these cases, an employee whose degree studies are approved for tuition assistance may submit annually for the maximum. The following documentation would be required:

- Tuition receipts for the year
- A brief report or letter describing the work the candidate has completed in the given year to further his/her studies
- A letter or brief report from the candidate's degree advisor indicating that appropriate progress has been made

Reimbursement for Support Staff employees also receiving Employment Stability Funds (ESF) is reimbursed annually in April following the end of the fiscal year. The required documentation for this reimbursement will be forwarded to Professional Development from the ESF Committee.

13. Transferring to a new program of study requires reapplication. Previously approved applications only cover the program that was indicated on the initial application.

14. Financial Assistance for Tuition Reimbursement is a limited fund. The College identifies an annual amount for the program. From year to year, the amount of money may be adjusted depending on the number of applications, Conestoga's available resources, and any plans for expansion/development.

## **Procedure for Applying for Financial Assistance for Tuition Reimbursement**

Courses and programs must be related to the current work of the employee, to the courses, programs or services delivered by the college, or in support of the employee's short term career advancement opportunities in preparation for potential positions or programs outlined in specific college plans.

### **Employee**

1. The employee completes the online [Application for Financial Assistance](#) and includes a written statement describing how the program specifically aligns with Conestoga's [strategic plan](#) or with the objectives of the department/school, and forwards the application and statement to their Supervisor for further completion.

### **Supervisor**

2. The supervisor may discuss the application with the applicant and with the Professional Development & Training Coordinator if required.

3. The supervisor submits, along with the application and the employees written statement, a brief recommendation letter confirming how completion of the proposed program specifically aligns with Conestoga's [strategic plan](#) or with the objectives of the department/school as outlined in the employees written statement to the Professional Development & Training Coordinator ([professionaldevelopment@conestogac.on.ca](mailto:professionaldevelopment@conestogac.on.ca)).

### **Professional Development**

5. The Professional Development & Training Coordinator reviews the application and where necessary consults with the Tuition Assistance Panel.

6. The Professional Development & Training Coordinator provides an email update notifying the applicant and the supervisor on the status of the application.

### **Employee**

7. Upon successful completion of each course, the employee submits the tuition receipt and the grade report to the Professional Development & Training Coordinator for reimbursement. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted within 6 months of the completion date of the course. Reimbursement submissions made after 6 months of course completion will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Note: Incomplete applications will not be considered.